Handprint

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Handprint

by chcrsk, starkaryen

Summary

Will presses his hand to Hannibal's glass and then he leaves. That night, Hannibal wonders if the handprint Will leaves behind is the last thing he'll see of him.

Notes

This fic was written by both Chococriskis and I :)

This was born in a (very long and in Spanish) conversation on twitter with meteca163, and what started being crack suddenly turned into a angsty conversation about the moment in The Wrath of the Lamb when Will touches the glass on Hannibal's cell.

We hope you like it!♥

See the end of the work for more notes

“Will”

He is offering his back and takes a deep breath. Hannibal wonders if he is collecting his expression before confronting him. He turns slowly, but not completely. He doesn’t want to take a single step back and Hannibal, he thinks, cannot take another step towards him without colliding with the Plexiglas wall. Finally, he exhales and looks exactly like that time in Florence, when they found each other in front of the Primavera and Will sat down with a sigh and the look of a man that has lived a thousand years. He’s not smiling this time.

“Was it good to see me?"

Will doesn’t even blink before giving the final blow.

“Good? No.”

And then it’s gone.

And then, he’s gone.

Hannibal stays quiet for a minute, two, five, ten. Eventually, he cocks his head and looks at Will’s handprint in the glass. He briefly thinks of all the times that he looked at Will's delicate hands in his office and thought that those were not the hands of a fisherman. Suddenly, it's too painful to look at the mark and turns to go back to his bed. He lies down and takes a book even if he knows that he’s not going to read a single word. Hannibal stares at the lines and waits until the lights finally switch off. Then, he leaves the book on the floor and looks back at the last thing of Will that remains with him.

Even in the darkness that is his room now, he can distinguish the subtle spot in which Will’s hand was pressed against the glass. Like a ripple in a calm pond, like a ridge in an otherwise smooth surface… But of course, he doesn’t see it exactly as a flaw. Right now, that handprint is the only thing that exists in Hannibal’s mind. And then, something occurs to him: what if. What if that is not only the only thing that remains of Will, but also the *last* thing.

Hannibal has to close his eyes for a second, suddenly light-headed at the thought. He had set everything in motion, and it had been going well, he’s lured Will again… But Francis being destroyed by something as banal as suicide had definitely not been among the possible outcomes Hannibal’s mind had considered, not in the slightest. There is a possibility that, somehow, in some way that he can’t quite grasp yet, the Dragon isn’t really dead. After all, how can everything be over in such a deplorable way? And yet… What if it is? What if this *really* is the end of it all?

Hannibal opens his eyes again, now much more adjusted to the darkness, and his gaze goes straight to the handprint once again as he slowly rises to his feet.

Hannibal has spent three years there, waiting, waiting. He has spent days waiting, too, for each of Will’s visits, weaving from there the events that had occurred. But in that moment, as

he stops right before the glass, his eyes staring at the only vestige of Will's presence in his room, his faith wavers for the first time.

He cannot believe how disappointing Francis turned out to be. How unworthy. After all those perfect designs. It was perfect indeed. Perfect for Will. The savage slaughter of families. Children. Hell, he even killed the dogs. It was a golden ticket. And that magnificence is suddenly wasted. All because of love, or what Dolarhyde thought it was love. Well, he cannot reproach him that.

But oh, how deeply Hannibal despised that false dragon right now. In his anger, he imagines himself striking Francis with a spear, entering him through his mouth and piercing the back of his skull, like St George did. The very image has been portrayed again and again during centuries. It is not the first time that he has toyed with the idea since he learned about the dragon, but his approach to the subject was slightly different. Hannibal closes his eyes and immediately sees the picture that has been his last thought before falling asleep during these weeks. St Michael in combat with the demons of hell as Raphael pictured him, surrounded by death and destruction. He remembers the first time he visited the paint in Paris, admiring how Raphael reflected Dante's Inferno in the background. He was enraptured by it. However, it pales in comparison to the composition his own mind has created. Will, dressed as a roman soldier with a peaceful expression, wings spread, his eyes fixed and his sword raised. The doomed dragon under his foot, his neck trapped merciless.

And this death is not Hannibal's design. This is not the hot bloody anger of a knight. This is the justice of an angel, rightful and terrible. And god, it is beautiful.

When he focuses back on the glass, the image fades away from his mind. Now, because of Francis' weakness, Will won't be able to stand victorious over the dragon, nor soon or ever. Now, Will might not come back to him.

Hannibal wonders then if Will really means his farewell. If he will be able return to the perfect family he has created after dancing with Hannibal again, after being so perfect in unison with him, even more blurred into each other than they were before Italy. He wonders, too, if another opportunity like the Dragon will arise, a new killer for which Uncle Jack will be forced to draw Will out of his retirement. But Hannibal knows this was it. No other will be as fitting.

If very few things have managed to cause Hannibal real anguish in his entire life, that thought very much achieves it now. And then, he thinks of something else: the handprint on the glass is, for him, the most valuable thing inside that room now. But for the orderlies that will surely come tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, Will's last impression will merely be a stain to be erased, like a bug squashed against a windshield. And for a second, that elicits a new wave of yet another feeling he has not felt in a very long time; helplessness.

Hannibal clenches his fists at his sides as he takes another half step forwards, the faltering sigh he exhales through his mouth steaming the glass and not allowing him to see the handprint for a second. When the cloud dissipates, Hannibal's mind does so too, if only slightly. He realizes that one of his trains of thought is focused on determining how to preserve Will's mark for as long as possible, delaying the orderlies' inevitable work. Hannibal chuckles for the first time in three years. Almost a laugh that reverberates in the

walls and startles him a little. How incredibly pathetic is that. How incredibly pathetic has he become. However, Hannibal doesn't feel sorry. Regrets, he has a few, but not because of that. Feeling remorse is a consequence of having reached a crossroads and chosen wrong. But he hadn't even had to make a decision. He had realized while sitting on Will's chair, back in Wolf Trap, looking at him right after he said his goodbyes and called him by his name. The path was already traced and he had no other alternative but to follow it.

It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves, Hannibal thinks and, right after: *Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind*. He pondered when his life had started to become a Shakespearian tragedy.

Hannibal considers going back to his bed and trying to get some rest. He quickly dismisses the idea. There is no point on pretending he is going to sleep at all that night. Whether the Dragon is really dead or not, he's going to find out very soon. Whatever his trick defying death could be, the bluff would not stand more than a few hours. Full moon is going to last only a few more nights so time is running out.

He raises his hand towards the wall that separates him from the entire world and reaches the mark that has become his relic, caressing with his fingertips the contour of Will's hand; almost a phantom touch, a gesture of reverence. And after a long, long time, he prays as he did as a kid. Not to a god or to anything in particular. Hannibal just allows the deepest desires of his soul to flow and take control of his mind. And he just waits in his vigil for his fate to catch up to him.

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"Hannibal, are you alright?"

Hannibal blinks and turns his head to the voice that has dragged him from his thoughts. He looks at the exquisite, lovely and very dirty man that stands in front of him. The very man follows Hannibal's eyes and looks back at his own handprint drafted on the crystal sliding door.

"Yeah, sorry about that," he says, nodding to the stain in the glass. "We were playing in the garden and it started to rain. I didn't want the dogs to get wet so we came back in a hurry and I just pushed the door. I know how much you hate when I bath them inside the house. Relax, your highness, I will make it disappear right know, before you start complaining about my savage manners."

Hannibal smiles fondly and gets up, leaving the book he wasn't reading on the coffee table.

"Don't worry, I will clean it. Take a shower and I'll prepare dinner."

He says it without any trace of emotion. Will smiles back and turns in order to climb the stairs when he feels a hand skimming the damp shirt over his belly, an arm that snares and holds him tight and a face pressed to his nape.

"I love you."

The body he has embraced stirs and trembles and relaxes nearly at the same time, and then it leans slightly against him with an almost soundless sigh.

Hannibal lets his lover go before he can ask what this is about, and he senses the curious gaze that Will glances at him and his unasked question, but he doesn't turn to look at him. After a brief pause, Will finally moves, climbing the stairs two at a time, probably eager to get the scent of dog and sweat off his skin.

Only when he hears the water running in the upstairs bathroom, he turns and stares at the mark in the glass. This one is a little different: a smudged handprint that blurred when Will had to make an effort to slide the door open. All feels different now.

Hannibal just smiles and turns to go to the kitchen, thinking that some prays are heard, after all.

End Notes

A HUGE thanks to chococriskis for being a wonderful co-writer. I had never co-written anything, and I've LOVED this experience. Best teamwork! <3.
Thanks to meteca163 too, for the conversation in which this was born<3

Also, this is the Raphael painting Hannibal pictures in his mind.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!